

# From Kosovo to the War on Terror

## The Collapsing Transatlantic Consensus, 1999–2002

*Edwina S. Campbell*

### Introduction

THE YEARS since al-Qaeda's September 11, 2001, attack on the United States have not been happy ones for the transatlantic relationship.<sup>1</sup> Despite initial European rhetorical solidarity with the United States, disagreements with Washington about how to deal with al-Qaeda and its Taliban hosts in Afghanistan emerged almost immediately in the fall of 2001. Six years later, in 2007, there is no transatlantic consensus on a strategy to counter the terrorist threat and create international stability over the long term. Compared to the transatlantic consensus that existed in 1954, six years after the 1948 Berlin blockade and the start of the Cold War, the state of the relationship today is bleak, indeed.

The common wisdom is that the collapse of the transatlantic relationship began with disagreements at the United Nations over how to deal with Iraq in the fall of 2002, and that the American decision to invade Iraq in March 2003 destroyed the alleged post-9/11 solidarity of Europe with the United States. This article contradicts that view. It argues, instead, that the “dialogue” between Europe and the United States in early 2002, a year before the invasion of Iraq and only six months after 9/11, was already characterized by a degree of mutual sniping that frequently seemed to have lost sight of the fact that a terrorist threat existed at all. European complaints about American decisions (and decision makers), and the United States’ discontent with the declining military capabilities of its continental allies already dominated what was increasingly a *dialogue des sourds*.

---

Edwina S. Campbell, professor of national security studies at Air Command and Staff College since 2003, is a former Foreign Service officer and member of the faculties of the National Defense University and the University of Virginia. Her publications include *Germany's Past and Europe's Future: The Challenges of West German Foreign Policy*. She is working on a new book, *War and American Power*.

<b>Report Documentation Page</b>			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
<p>Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.</p>				
1. REPORT DATE <b>2007</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED		
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> <b>From Kosovo to the War on Terror. The Collapsing Transatlantic Consensus, 1999-2002</b>			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
			5b. GRANT NUMBER	
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>			5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
			5e. TASK NUMBER	
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> <b>Air University, Strategic Studies Quarterly, 155 N. Twining St BG 693, Maxwell AFB, AL, 36112-6026</b>			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.</b>				
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>				
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>				
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b>				
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b> a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> <b>43</b>
b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>				
c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>				

The result of this transatlantic self-absorption in early 2002 was an overstated dichotomy between American “unilateralism” and European “multilateralism” that did little to define a strategy against a common enemy. But there was, perhaps, method to this madness. By focusing their attention at the time on their mutual disgruntlement and perceived shortcomings, the Allies avoided posing the most basic of questions: did they have a common enemy, requiring them to define a common strategy? If both sides of the Atlantic had faced that question honestly, as they had when threatened by Soviet communism a half century before, they would have had to confront the disquieting reality that yes was not the European answer. Instead, for a brief moment in the year after 9/11, they continued to paper over profound transatlantic differences, a habit which they had developed in the 1990s and that proved catastrophic in early 2003.

There were new threats confronting the United States after 9/11, but the American determination to act alone, if necessary, in 2003 was not only a result of those threats, but of a decade of frustration with European unwillingness since the end of the Cold War to accept the necessity for a new NATO and European role in a changed strategic context. Despite the rhetoric of NATO’s fiftieth anniversary summit in 1999, there was on 9/11 no European-American consensus on what constituted the common political basis of the transatlantic relationship ten years after the implosion of the Soviet Union. The terrorist attacks did not provoke the creation of a new consensus; instead, they revealed that the old Cold War one was gone forever.

There was a last, futile attempt in early 2002 to analogize post-9/11 transatlantic disagreements to the squabbles of 1982 or 1962, in the hope that they could thus be domesticated, managed, and regarded as “business as usual.” Europeans and Americans on both sides of the Atlantic, “old NATO hands,” had managed this sleight of hand throughout the 1990s with the best of intentions but the worst of results. To any outside observer, it was clear that their ability to do so had ended with the Alliance’s profoundly destructive internal crisis over Kosovo in 1999.

Amid disagreements over how to deal with the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Atlanticists in both Europe and the United States in the 1990s had comforted themselves with the conviction that the NATO Alliance had weathered bad storms before. But by 2002, there was little comfort to be found in such convictions. Americans began to talk openly of the end of the post-1945 transatlantic relationship, and Europeans were met with a new phenomenon: American indifference to

their opinions and criticism. Viewed from Washington, new international constellations were forming, for the first time in nearly fifty years, since West Germany joined NATO. The most important of these in 2002 involved Washington with Moscow and New Delhi, but the emerging Russian-American and Indian-American bilateral relationships were one result, not the cause, of the disentangling of the once entangling Atlantic alliance.

## **Strategic Changes and Missed Opportunities in the 1990s**

The changes that began to be evident in American strategy within a few months of September 11, 2001, were, in some ways, ten years overdue. In the two years from November 1989, when the Soviet Union decided not to take military action to maintain its East German satellite, until December 1991, it was possible to believe that German unification would not fundamentally change the *global* strategic equation for the United States. There were still two superpowers, and while the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in early 1991 had been largely a US military show, it was, nevertheless, the result of a genuine coalition effort, militarily, politically, and especially financially. Washington needed its allies in Europe and Japan, and its chief diplomatic concern was still the negotiation of arms control agreements with Moscow. There was little indication that the United States would be regarded as a “hyperpower” by the end of the 1990s.<sup>2</sup>

But by early 1992, it should have been clear that future American strategy could not be built on the flimsy foundation that the first Bush administration characterized as “status quo plus.”<sup>3</sup> By then, three major developments had shown how critical was the need for a bolder American approach to refashioning the post–Cold War world: the mounting evidence that Saddam Hussein was going to survive as leader of Iraq, despite his defeat in the 1991 Gulf War; the agreement of its members at Maastricht in December 1991 to recreate the European Community as the European Union (EU); and the collapse of both Mikhail Gorbachev’s leadership and the Soviet Union itself at the end of that year. But that bolder approach was not forthcoming from Washington.

Instead, the last year of the first Bush presidency was a period of economic, political, and diplomatic stagnation. Seen in the overall context of twelve Republican years in the White House, beginning with Ronald Reagan’s 1980 victory over Jimmy Carter, it was perhaps not surprising

that President Bush and his senior staff seemed overwhelmed by the new strategic context with which they were confronted, and more comfortable with the era that was ending. As John Lewis Gaddis observed, “With the four decades of Cold War, which after all encompasses the whole lifetime [of] a whole generation of leaders, the abnormalities of that situation became so normal that now to begin to depart from them, now to begin to go back to what was on our wish list in 1947, is making people intensely uncomfortable.”<sup>4</sup> Like their political contemporaries in Britain (Margaret Thatcher), France (François Mitterrand), and Germany (Helmut Kohl), Bush and his advisers had spent their political capital in the first years of a long tenure in office. They had come to office in 1981 to prosecute the Cold War. But their adversary in that struggle had literally disappeared, and they appeared unable to articulate exactly what their vision was of the “new world order” supposedly born in 1990–91.

In fact, there was not much that was “new” in President Bush’s expectations of the post–Cold War “world order,” proclaimed in the context of the 1991 Gulf War. The chief innovation was to have been the ability of the United States and the Soviet Union to reach agreement in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), as the drafters of the charter (at least the American ones) had hoped in 1944–45. But with the demise of the USSR and the advent of nearly a decade of economic collapse, institutional chaos, spreading criminality, and erratic political leadership in Russia, the idea that Soviet-American cooperation would shape the post–Cold War world was stillborn. The administration left office in 1993, never having found an idea to replace it.

It is important to recall this history, because September 11 and subsequent events revealed the significance of much that was not done, or was not done well, in the early 1990s. Neither the members of the European Union, nor the EU as an institution, nor the United States was prepared to pose the fundamental questions: What has the Cold War left in its wake? What kind of world do we want? What needs to be done? Instead, they began with the assumption that their task was to maintain the two key Western institutions of the Cold War years, NATO and the EU, and initially sought to adapt the tasks to those institutions, rather than the other way around.

This had its most disastrous short-term consequences in the wars of the former Yugoslavia. In search of a political mission and without military competencies, the EU attempted to use diplomatic and economic means in its

dealings with Yugoslavia and its successor states. In search of a classical war-fighting or deterrent role for its armed forces, the United States attempted to ignore a crisis that initially did not require such capabilities. Overestimating its ability to prosecute essentially any kind of war it wished, after five years of American and EU disarray, Belgrade eventually overreached—twice—and brought about a NATO consensus on the use of classical armed force against Serbia itself. By 1999, NATO had a military mission, but going “out of area” was not the key to keep the Alliance from going “out of business,” as Secretary General Manfred Woerner had once suggested. Prosecution of the Kosovo War revealed how widespread was the mutual transatlantic disenchantment that had developed during the 1990s.

Although the Clinton administration had come to office in 1993 more favorably disposed than its predecessor to a European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the Europeans themselves were largely responsible for the failure of this disposition to be translated into American policy in the 1990s. Both Washington and Paris allowed the proposed reintegration of French forces into NATO to degenerate into a shouting match over command of AFSOUTH, contributing to the growing disenchantment of the Clinton administration with its European allies. However, the main problem was not in Paris but in Bonn. Throughout most of the 1990s, Germany used its bilateral relationship with the United States to pursue a policy of military abdication that met German domestic needs, but was disastrously out of touch with the strategic challenges of the decade.

The chief component of this policy was Bonn’s success in convincing the United States to support NATO enlargement. Initially hostile to the idea, and receptive to French ideas that “adaptation” of the Alliance had to precede its enlargement,<sup>5</sup> the Clinton administration had abandoned this position and accepted the necessity of formal NATO enlargement by October 1994. Richard Holbrooke, first as US ambassador in Bonn, then as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, drove the change in US policy.<sup>6</sup> Holbrooke was strongly influenced by the views of German defense minister Volker Rühe, who in turn reflected the assumption of the Kohl government that a military leadership role for Germany was unacceptable both domestically and to Bonn’s European partners.

Given this assumption, it was logical that the Federal Republic sought a new NATO “task”—enlargement—that would keep the United States militarily engaged in Europe.<sup>7</sup> It was also logical, given the domestic political climate regarding deployment of German forces outside the NATO

area, that Bonn continually declined to develop the military capabilities that might have given the EU's diplomatic efforts in the Balkans the credibility that they sorely lacked.<sup>8</sup> But in giving priority to its short-term domestic political problems, the German government was in large part responsible for the tendencies in American policy which it (and its European partners) came to lament by 1999. The continuing focus of the United States on NATO as *the* venue for transatlantic political-military decision making and action, Washington's emphasis on the military element of national power, and its disdain for the military capabilities of its continental European allies should have come as no surprise. For much of the decade, Germany had encouraged the United States to define its relationship to Europe in terms of NATO, while simultaneously failing to carry out the Bundeswehr reforms and commit the resources necessary for the EU to develop the military credibility desired by Paris.

Even more disastrously, instead of accepting the fact that they needed to adapt to a vastly changed strategic context, both Americans and Europeans attempted to make the issues fit their capabilities. Europeans, comfortable with economic aid programs and trade packages, tried to define the world's problems as amenable to solution with nonmilitary means. Equally shortsighted, the United States terminated much of its public diplomacy, looked to private sector activity to encourage economic development, and declined to "waste" its military resources on less than a "peer competitor." By the end of the decade, they had both grudgingly come to accept the necessity of their participation in peacekeeping activities under the auspices of the UN or regional organizations.<sup>9</sup> But until September 11, from Somalia through Bosnia and Rwanda to Kosovo, the assumption remained that the maintenance and projection of armed forces was optional and, in contrast to the Cold War, had little to do with one's own security.

As the decade came to an end, the United States began to revise that assumption because of a growing concern with the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by "rogue states" and their possible acquisition by criminal and terrorist non-state actors. But the Clinton administration had little success in convincing its allies of the seriousness of this threat. Nor was there a consensus in Washington about the direction of US foreign policy. In January 2001, when George W. Bush became US president, he was committed to defending the interests of the United States. But how those interests were defined, against what types of threats they needed to be defended, and with what means, remained unclear.

What was clear was that the transatlantic disharmony already apparent in the last two years of the Clinton administration was likely to grow worse. This soon proved to be the case.

## **Dueling Institutions: NATO and the EU from Kosovo to September 11**

The two years between the Kosovo War and the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington were characterized by an unattractive institutional duel between NATO and the EU that showed how disconnected from strategic reality both sides of the Atlantic had become. Equally unattractive was the frequently shrill rhetoric accompanying the duel in both Europe and the United States. The 2000 American presidential election campaign and the first months of the Bush presidency saw this rhetoric peak in the United States.

In the campaign, neither Vice President Gore nor Governor Bush had conveyed any understanding that the political and military engagement of the United States in the world had ceased to be optional, at the latest, in 1941. Instead, they both promised to defend American interests, Gore by arguing for multilateral cooperation with America's allies (which made him more attractive to Europeans), but to accomplish what goals remained ill-defined. Bush's suggestion that the United States had borne global burdens alone long enough and was being taken advantage of by free-riding Europeans, incapable of mounting even a small-scale peace-keeping mission on their own, better captured the American mood. In the background was the question of National Missile Defense (NMD), to which Bush was more overtly committed than Gore, but which both of them supported in the broader context of defending what was not yet called (outside a small circle of defense experts) the American "homeland." To the general public, the whole issue seemed more theoretical than real, a far cry from public reaction to the ICBM issue of the late 1950s.

After taking office in January 2001, Bush moved quickly to show what he understood to be in the American interest, and by doing so, gave the Europeans further cause to escalate their rhetoric against the American "hyperpower." Disengagement from the Arab-Israeli peace process that had so preoccupied the Clinton administration, open criticism of South Korea's approach to détente with North Korea, and the declaration that the United States would accept neither the Kyoto Protocol nor the Inter-

national Criminal Court confirmed Europe's worst suspicions about the "unilateral" governor of Texas.

Less noticed in Europe, but more important as a sign of the thinking of the new president, was a de-escalation of American rhetoric regarding the desirability of greater European military capabilities. Clinton's Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, had spent much of his last two years in office encouraging the European allies to accept the implications of the "revolution in military affairs" (RMA), restructure their armed forces, and devote more resources to defense research and development. There were many complaints in Europe in 1999–2000 about Cohen's "preaching," especially about a December 1999 speech to the Bundeswehr in Hamburg, in which he said, "The disparity of capabilities, if not corrected, could threaten the unity of this alliance."<sup>10</sup> In contrast, at the 2001 Munich Security Conference, his successor, Donald Rumsfeld, reiterated America's determination to develop and deploy missile defenses (MD), both nationally and regionally, to protect US allies and forces outside the United States, as well as the homeland, but he wasted little time on exhortations to his European colleagues.<sup>11</sup>

This change in tone from the new Secretary of Defense deserved more attention than it got in Europe. It was a sign that, less than two years after NATO's fiftieth anniversary summit in April 1999, the United States was moving away from what had remained one of its chief goals in the 1990s, the attempt to maintain NATO as the principal venue of transatlantic political and military cooperation and to develop it as the principal venue of global burden-sharing. It was not, however, a sign that Washington now expected that cooperation to become "Euro-Atlantic," taking place between the EU on one side and the two North American allies on the other. That might have been the result, had the Europeans listened with more attention and less irritation to Secretary Cohen,<sup>12</sup> but they had not.

Rumsfeld's message indicated that the Bush administration, at the outset, had few expectations concerning the future political-military role of NATO. It did not share the Clinton administration's hope that the continental European allies would make a serious commitment to reforming their armed forces and increasing their defense budgets. In the absence of a substantial investment by the Europeans in the operational capabilities needed for "out of area" military burden-sharing, the United States was unwilling to share strategic decision making on issues of global stability with them in the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

The origin of this attitude on the part of the new administration was the American experience with NATO during the 1999 Kosovo War. Preoccupied with their own experience with NATO during that war, senior European officials spent the better part of 1999 and 2000 being self-righteously indignant about American unilateralism in planning and conducting air operations over Kosovo and Serbia. This kept most of them from focusing on the fact that senior Americans—both inside the Clinton administration and soon to be inside the Bush administration—also spent the better part of 1999 and 2000 being self-righteously indignant about how NATO had handled Kosovo. For the Americans, the problem was the Europeans' expectation that they would be consulted strategically about an issue, even though they had virtually no operational military contribution to make to its resolution.

Ironically, there was a broad transatlantic consensus about what had happened during the Kosovo War: the Europeans had generally proven to be operationally irrelevant, and the Americans had made and carried out operational decisions unilaterally. To Washington's frustration, their operational irrelevance did not stop the Europeans from expecting to have a major say in the development of NATO strategy. To the Europeans' frustration, in the end, whatever their opinion, the Americans had the capabilities to ignore them and act alone.

In the two years that followed, Europeans frequently acted as if they were the only ones to draw conclusions from the Kosovo experience. They were angry with the Americans, and despite assurances to the contrary, they set about creating a framework in the EU that would allow them, they hoped, next time, to react independently from the United States to a crisis in Europe. At its June 1999 ministerial in Cologne, Helsinki that December, Feira in June 2000, and the December 2000 summit in Nice, the EU began to develop a Common European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). This included agreement on a "Headline Goal" to create a 60,000-man rapid reaction force; the appointment of Javier Solana as Secretary General of the European Council and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy; and other "Headline Goals" designed to give the EU military capabilities that it had never had.<sup>13</sup>

Caught up in these activities, which occupied them for the last eighteen months of the Clinton administration, EU leaders failed to notice that what they were doing—and not doing—seemed disconnected from global realities as seen by Washington. The departure of UN weapons inspectors from Iraq; terrorist attacks on US embassies in Africa, on the

USS *Cole*, and at other American installations overseas; and North Korean missile tests had all begun to concentrate the attention of the American government, Congress, military, and ultimately the American public on the threat from “rogue states” and terrorists. Within the American defense community, the threat of the use of WMDs by such enemies against the population and territory of the United States itself was a particular concern, well before the Clinton administration departed. War games played by the senior US military colleges were already exercising such scenarios in 1999–2000.

In this time frame, as US defense secretary Cohen urged European governments to concentrate their efforts on force restructuring and increased defense R&D, what Washington saw instead was an EU focused on creating new positions in Brussels, and seemingly convinced that the “Petersberg Tasks” were the only type of missions with which Europe would have to deal.<sup>14</sup> Most importantly, in the country that Washington considered crucial to the creation of credible European power projection—Germany—there was no effort to increase defense spending or begin professionalization of the armed forces, as France had done in 1996.<sup>15</sup> The American hope, expressed in the Strategic Concept adopted at the April 1999 Washington summit, that NATO would be a mechanism not only for regional peacekeeping activities but also for global power projection did not survive the Kosovo War.<sup>16</sup> The strategic conclusion that the United States drew from the EU’s reaction to Kosovo was that, in the area of global defense burden-sharing, there was likely to be little help forthcoming from the continental European allies.<sup>17</sup>

For their part, European elites did not seem to realize in 1999–2000 that their frustration with the United States was reciprocated. Apparently, they only recognized the extent to which Europe no longer figured in American planning for coalition operations—all of Cohen’s warnings notwithstanding—in the wake of Washington’s response to the September 11 attacks. As Nicole Gnesotto wrote in 2002, “[N]othing in the Europeans’ strategic culture, the humdrum institutional language of the Atlantic Alliance or even developments in the ESDP had prepared them for the paradox that transatlantic security relations could be called into question but not so much by a desire for European autonomy as by developments in America itself.”<sup>18</sup>

The surprise should not have been as great as it was. In addition to having taken office with virtually no expectation of having a European partner

in global burden-sharing, the Bush administration expected little sympathy in Europe for its domestic agenda, and it was not disappointed. European intellectual elites had made known their dislike of the impeachment of President Clinton, their preference for Vice President Gore's more "multi-lateral" approach to foreign policy, and their disbelief and disdain at the outcome of the 2000 US presidential election. In early 2001, European media contained virtually daily attacks on aspects of the American domestic political and judicial system that had little to do with partisan differences in the United States or with President Bush as an individual. But he became the symbol of an "American way of life" that was reviled and ridiculed in Europe. "More than any other American head of state," commented Pascal Bruckner, "Bush crystallizes all that we hate in America."<sup>19</sup>

Virtually no aspect of American society escaped European criticism, from weekly church attendance to the death penalty, from (too many) speed limits to (the lack of) gun control and government-funded health care. But more disquieting than the substance of the criticism—which was, after all, shared by many Americans, on issues like the death penalty—was the almost universal absence of nuance and historical perspective. A minority of well-informed European observers of American life warned their fellow Europeans about the destructive tendencies of such culturally-motivated attacks on the United States, but with little effect.<sup>20</sup> By mid-2001, it was not only senior Bush administration officials, but working-level American diplomats, military officers, and academics who came away disheartened by encounters with their European colleagues. As September 11 approached, much of the American foreign policy elite had reluctantly concluded that European criticism of the "American way of life" said little about the United States, but revealed a great deal about the Europeans who engaged in it.

### **Initial American and European Responses to the Terrorist Attacks**

It was in this atmosphere of mutual recriminations that the terrorist attacks took place on September 11, 2001. As the initial shock spread from New York and Washington across the United States and around the world, the spontaneous reaction of the vast majority of Europeans was one of sympathy for those who had died. Their governments, at the same time, committed themselves to support the American government's response, not only in public expressions of solidarity, but also in formal resolutions

of the UN Security Council and the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty in the North Atlantic Council.<sup>21</sup>

The reaction in the United States to the rapid and formal expressions of European support was twofold. For the American public, such solidarity was expected. After all, “we,” the Americans, had fought two world wars and supported “them,” the European democracies, through forty years of Cold War. The American public would have been surprised and taken aback had European sympathy and support not been immediately forthcoming. For American decision makers, however, the European response, while gratifying, was less expected. Given the state of transatlantic relations in the first half of 2001, they were pleasantly surprised by initial expressions of “unconditional solidarity” from Europe.<sup>22</sup>

As the weeks passed, however, it became clear that, even on September 11 and 12, 2001, the basis of the European response had been different in significant respects from that of the US. By the end of 2001, with the defeat of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, the differing approaches of the two sides of the Atlantic to dealing with terrorism began to be aired in public. By mid-2002, it was possible to see how far apart they were—and always had been—despite immediate post-9/11 European expressions of solidarity with the United States.

There were three significant differences between initial American and European reactions to what had happened in New York and Virginia. Ignoring those differences, while taking Europe’s early declarations of solidarity with the United States at face value, has been largely responsible for the erroneous belief that the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 shattered an existing transatlantic consensus. There was, in fact, never a transatlantic consensus on the nature of the 9/11 attacks, why they took place, or how the terrorists should be dealt with.

The first difference in their reaction to 9/11 was that, at the most basic level, Europeans and Americans described differently what had happened on that day. For Americans, the territory and people of the United States were attacked; for Europeans, thousands of innocent civilians died in the attack on the World Trade Center. The difference may appear minor, but it is not. If only the Pentagon, or even the White House and Capitol, had been attacked, it is highly unlikely that European reaction, both formal and informal, would have been the same as it was. The North Atlantic Council and the UN Security Council would no doubt have met, but whether the former would have invoked Article 5, and whether the sub-

stance of the UNSC resolutions would have been the same, is at least questionable. More importantly, though, public and media reaction in Europe would have been vastly different.

A significant segment of European opinion would have regretted the use of a civilian aircraft as a weapon, but regarded the Pentagon as a legitimate target, both nerve center and symbol of American global reach.<sup>23</sup> Any outpouring of sympathy would most likely have been more than balanced by a feeling that American military power was the magnet that attracted such enemies. As Karl-Heinz Kamp wrote, “[A]nti-American tendencies were not limited to the left wing of the German political spectrum. Already after the catastrophe of September 11, the view that the United States bears a great deal of responsibility for being hated in large parts of the world could also be heard in conservative circles.”<sup>24</sup> This view was widespread in other European countries, as well as in Germany.

Moreover, even at the formal governmental level, initial reactions to an attack only on the Pentagon would probably have been quite different. There might not have been a Joint Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the European Union, as there was on September 14, 2001, but had there been one, its wording would probably have been different. It is unlikely to have referred to an “assault on humanity” or to “faceless killers who claim the lives of innocent victims,”<sup>25</sup> if the dead had all been US military officers and civilian employees of the Department of Defense.<sup>26</sup>

Needless to say, this would not have made any difference in the American *political* reaction.<sup>27</sup> The attack on the World Trade Center and the civilian deaths there certainly, at specific moments, strengthened American resolve,<sup>28</sup> but the fundamental event of September 11, for Americans, was not civilian casualties, but the attack on the people and territory of the United States. In this respect, the destruction of part of the Pentagon and the planned attack on the Capitol were more troubling than the collapse of the Twin Towers, since they were assaults on the institutions of American government and the United States Constitution itself.

The fundamentally different interpretations in Europe and the United States of what mattered in the events of September 11 led to the second important transatlantic difference: Europeans objected vehemently in 2001–2 to the American use of the word “war.” The simplicity of the statement, “We were directly attacked; we are at war,”<sup>29</sup> was mocked in Europe as simplistic and overwrought; and the absence of that word in the EU’s Joint Declaration of September 14, 2001, revealed the basic transatlantic

difference in approach to the terrorists. For Europeans, they were criminals to be brought to justice; for Americans, an enemy to be defeated. The EU

would make every possible effort to ensure that those responsible for these acts of savagery are brought to justice and punished. The US administration and the American people can count on our complete solidarity and full cooperation to ensure that justice is done. . . . Those responsible for hiding, supporting or harbouring the perpetrators, organisers and sponsors of these acts will be held accountable.<sup>30</sup>

The “urgent decisions on how the European Union should respond to these challenges” included developing CFSP “with a view to ensuring that the Union is genuinely capable of speaking out clearly and doing so with one voice”; making “every effort to strengthen our intelligence efforts against terrorism”; and accelerating “implementation of a genuine European judicial area.”<sup>31</sup> Clearly, the United States government welcomed these decisions. But as important as improved intelligence and judicial cooperation were in the fight against terrorism, more interesting was what was not mentioned in the declaration as part of the effort to make ESDP “operational as soon as possible.”<sup>32</sup> The word “war” was never used, nor was there any reference to the armed forces of EU member states, nor to augmentation of their defense budgets. The problem was apparently not seen by European governments as one requiring the EU to think about the classical use of armed force, despite the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

The contrasting American approach became clear a few weeks later, when the United States responded on October 7, 2001, to the Taliban government’s refusal to deny al-Qaeda terrorists the use of Afghanistan as a base of operations. As the United States government, “in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter,” informed the United Nations:

On 11 September 2001, *the United States was the victim* of massive and brutal attacks in the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

From the territory of Afghanistan, the Al-Qaeda organization continues to train and support agents of terror who attack innocent people throughout the world and target United States nationals and interests in the United States and abroad.

In response to these attacks, and in accordance with the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense, United States armed forces have initiated actions designed to prevent and deter further attacks on the United States.<sup>33</sup> (emphasis added)

As the letter stated, in the American view, while the September 11 attacks had resulted in thousands of deaths, it was the United States itself, not innocent civilians, that had been the victim of the attack. The United States Congress had authorized and the President had ordered the use of classical military means in response.<sup>34</sup> The prevention and deterrence of future attacks on the United States, through the use of US military force, if necessary, were already at the top of the American agenda.

Finally, the third transatlantic difference was the extent to which Europe's initial response to 9/11 was shaped by its preexisting hostility to the American president. Within the first few days after September 11, Americans began receiving messages from European friends and colleagues expressing sympathy and solidarity, but also asking nervously what the United States government—or more precisely, what George Bush—intended to do. There was greater fear in Europe, immediately after 9/11, of the possible American military response to what had happened than of further terrorist attacks. When it became clear in Europe (as it always was in the United States) that there would not be a swift, unthinking American military reaction out of anger or “revenge,” European commentators breathed a sigh of relief—and surprise. The former Texas governor was apparently not as “quick on the draw” as their stereotypes had led them to believe.

But these stereotypes did not go away. They lay dormant throughout the fall of 2001, and by early 2002, they returned with a vengeance, compounding the other transatlantic differences that had manifested themselves in the initial responses to the September 11 attacks. Europeans had reacted to the deaths of thousands of civilians, not to the attack on the Pentagon. Europeans saw themselves in a *fight against terrorism*, while Americans had declared a *war on terrorism*, as described by President Bush. Europeans wanted to protect their societies from terrorist attacks and saw intelligence and law enforcement cooperation as the way to do so. So did Americans—but they also saw military action as playing an important role in defeating the terrorists and their supporters—in certain places and circumstances, the most important role.

Their dislike of President Bush's personality and politics led European commentators to begin again in 2002 to argue that he had never “really” been elected president of the United States and had no legitimacy for his actions. Americans, meanwhile, of both political parties, gave the US president unprecedented approval for his response to September 11.<sup>35</sup> As a result, by mid-2002 in Europe, the atmospherics of the transatlantic

relationship bore a great deal of resemblance to the state of affairs in the summer of 2001. Almost as if the attacks of September 11 had never happened, complaints about the United States, and not the terrorist threat, seemed to be Europe's greatest concern.

## **Contradictions of European Multilateralism**

But things were different in the United States, and that alone changed the nature of the transatlantic relationship in the year after 9/11. Whether they liked the situation or not, whether they agreed with the vocabulary used by Washington or not, Europeans found themselves with an American ally at war, with drastically different priorities than it had had in the summer of 2001. One of the main reasons that European influence began to wane in Washington in 2002 was the attempt of European governments, with the exception of the United Kingdom, to maintain virtually unchanged both the topics and the pace of their national, EU, and NATO agendas as they had existed before September 11. Europe's unwillingness to confront the strategic reality represented by the terrorist attacks reinforced the United States' lack of interest, dating to the Kosovo experience, in acting politically and militarily through NATO or with the EU.

As Nicole Gnesotto indicated,<sup>36</sup> the lack of American interest in their viewpoints and capabilities took Europeans by surprise after September 11. In determining its strategy in the war on terror in 2001–2, the United States "called into question" the future of "transatlantic security relations" not by a grand proposal to scrap NATO or by a modest one to reform it, but simply by ignoring the Alliance, more or less. And the European allies, like individuals ignored by those whose attention they were trying to attract, reacted predictably: they were insulted by American indifference.

There is a problem in using this word to describe what happened to the transatlantic relationship in 2002; "insults," as a factor influencing the behavior of modern state actors, are not supposed to exist.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, it is impossible to comprehend the vitriol accompanying transatlantic disagreements since 2001 without recognizing the way in which the abrupt change in emphasis in American foreign policy after September 11 forced on European leaders awareness of their countries' military and, to a certain extent, political impotence. The United States' reaction to 9/11, notably its "unilateral" approach to waging war in Afghanistan, suggested to European governments that, militarily, they were irrelevant strategically as

well as operationally, a conclusion that Washington had already reached in dealing with Kosovo two years before.

Throughout the 1990s, one goal of the European allies, generally unstated, had been to impress the status and importance of the European Union on the United States. In two instances, at the start of the Yugoslav crises and throughout the process of European Monetary Union (EMU), as the euro was introduced, European decision makers and media commentators revealed, perhaps inadvertently, how important this was to them. *Now*, they said, we will show the Americans. *Now* they will take us seriously. But the Balkans did not provide the diplomatic “hour of Europe” for which they had hoped; eventually, American bombers and American diplomats brought about the 1995 Dayton Accords.<sup>38</sup>

The case of EMU was even more instructive. European governments moved toward it, not without difficulty, but determinedly throughout the decade, and American skepticism was gradually replaced with confidence that they would succeed. Confronted with American complacency about the introduction and positive effects of the euro, however, Europeans were not always happy.<sup>39</sup> Was it not, after all, going to be a rival currency that would put the dollar in its place? The United States government and the American private sector were supposed to be worried by it. Instead, they were usually congratulatory. There was, thus, in 1999–2000, little satisfaction in EMU, in terms of the EU’s desire to impress Washington with its status as a rival financial power.

At the same time, as described above, the declining expectations of the United States, with regard to the military capabilities of the European allies and NATO’s role in promoting global stability, were already apparent in the last months of the Clinton administration. The political blood that was shed inside the Alliance in the run-up to the 1999 Washington summit could have been spared, given how quickly its conclusions were overtaken by the experience of the Kosovo War. The Bush administration’s expectations were even lower, but in early 2001 it had sent signals that were confusing in this regard—at least to Europeans preoccupied with their own agenda and simply unprepared to believe that the Americans, and not “the desire for European autonomy,” would call NATO into question. Continuing American support of NATO enlargement during Bush’s first months in office was misread in Europe as a sign that the United States saw the Alliance as the centerpiece of American foreign and defense policy, when, in fact, it merely meant that the Bush administration had

no reason to oppose enlargement. The Clinton administration had already paid the political price of setting that process in motion.

There was, indeed, despite the United States' frustrations with operational planning during the Kosovo War, and despite the pre-September 11 European criticism of American "unilateralism," a continuing willingness in Washington to work with Europeans within the NATO framework. In fact, the word "willingness" may understate the case. One might more accurately describe NATO as a habit of the American foreign policy elite—and as such, a great success story of the Cold War generations that had wanted the Alliance to be so "entangling" that its desirability would be self-evident to American decision makers.

The problem that 9/11 revealed was twofold: Europeans, not the United States, were supposed to decide when the "transatlantic" relationship would be supplanted by the "Euro-Atlantic" relationship, and the United States was supposed to continue to provide Europe's "security umbrella" until that day came. Had there been no catalytic event like the terrorist attacks to refocus American political and military energies elsewhere, this might have happened. But after 9/11, the Alliance was no longer the center of the American foreign policy universe. The shock, and the implicit insult, is still being absorbed in Europe in 2007. In 2002, it led to an impotent rage that erupted in the anti-American rhetoric that dominated the German federal election, and to the German-led obstruction of Anglo-American diplomacy in the UN Security Council in 2002–3.<sup>40</sup>

A year before that, however, European governments had already renewed their attacks on alleged American "unilateralism" or "multilateralism a la carte." The rhetoric of European politicians was often politically motivated, with a domestic audience in mind, but beyond that rhetoric, there existed a genuine problem: a fundamental transatlantic disagreement about the nature and purpose of multilateralism. This difference, in turn, stemmed from a disagreement over ends and means, and from the different European and American roles in the international system.

The United States is, in that system, a global political and military power—currently, the only one. At home, it is a union of fifty states, extremely decentralized in some ways, but not in the area of foreign and defense policy, competence for which clearly belongs to the federal government. International negotiations, whether formal or informal, are, for the United States, a means to an end—an attempt to achieve consensus on a particular issue with other members of the international system, one-on-one, among a few

states, or universally. Negotiations are entered into in good faith, and are not a zero-sum game. Nevertheless, entering into a negotiation does not mean accepting *a priori* that there will be an agreement. If one cannot be achieved, the negotiating parties are free to walk away, figuratively, if not literally. They are also free to return to the table when there is something new to discuss. Agreements are to be taken seriously—*pacta sunt servanda*—but are also subject to reappraisal, if conditions change: *rebus sic stantibus*.

There is nothing uniquely American about this approach to multilateralism and the international system. On the contrary, most states have a central political authority that makes foreign and defense policy, and they approach international negotiations as a means to achieve particular ends. The vast majority negotiate in good faith and accept that an agreement will depend on compromise—on avoiding a zero-sum game—but on some issues, even the smallest state will not be able to compromise and will walk away from a negotiation.

The unique position is not that of the United States but of the European Union. Externally, the EU has made enormous demands on both its American ally and the international system as a whole as it undergoes an unclear and frequently contradictory process of internal reform and enlargement. To the vast majority of states in the world that deal only with the EU on economic and trade issues, these contradictions have, historically at least, been manageable. But as the EU's diplomatic, political, and military roles change, the contradictions become more important to the functioning of the international system. Among other things, the EU is overrepresented in international institutions like the United Nations.

In 2002, 15 EU member countries claimed to have a common foreign and security policy. In 2007, that number is 27. If there is one policy—if they constitute a *union*—there is no logic to each state having a vote in the United Nations General Assembly. Several EU members always sit on the Security Council, two of them as permanent members. But there has been no EU willingness to recognize the contradiction in the world allocating to Europe the right to cast several votes in the Security Council and the General Assembly, even if all of those votes reflect a common policy. With the enlargement of the EU since 2004, the disparity of European representation in universal international organizations has become even greater than it was immediately after 9/11.

The EU pays a price for its diffuse decision-making processes in terms of lost resources, time, energies, and, ultimately, influence. While de-

manding that the world—particularly the United States—take the Union seriously and treat it as a single entity, its members do not even do so themselves. Each of them still has full diplomatic representation in each other's capitals, and accords full state honors to a visiting head of state or government from another member country. If the United States offered to close all American embassies in EU member countries and deal with “Europe” only through the US Mission to the European Union in Brussels, it is unlikely that EU members would be pleased.

Immediately after September 11, the Europeans, not the United States, chose how they would deal with Washington. Had they sent Javier Solana (or Romano Prodi or Chris Patten) to represent the “Euro” side of the Euro-Atlantic relationship, the American government would have dealt with him. Instead, there was almost a race to be first at Ground Zero and the White House by individual EU member countries. In their more candid moments, Europeans acknowledged in 2002 that the European Union as such lacked the competence to decide or implement any policy of political or military importance to the United States, but they simultaneously faulted the American government for continuing to deal with national European governments that did have such authority and capabilities.

In this situation, in which the US had found NATO interoperability to be sorely lacking in Kosovo, and the EU was, at best, a political and strategic embryo, the United States tried in 2001–2 to build and maintain an antiterrorist coalition. In working with national governments to do so, it was accused in Europe of a policy of *divide et impare*. A year later, in early 2003, the American defense secretary famously made a distinction between “new” and “old” Europe, and vented his frustrations at the latter.<sup>41</sup>

Two approaches to multilateralism clashed in 2002: the United States', with its own strong union, seeking partners in intergovernmental cooperation among the countries of the world, and the European Union's, based on a selective reading of the history of the origins of the EU itself. For the American government, multilateralism was, and remains, one possible means to specific ends (in this case, defeating terrorism). For Europeans, it had become by 2002 an end in itself, with continual intra-(West) European negotiations credited for peace and prosperity in post–World War II Europe.

On one level, this was true—multilateral cooperation did play a crucial role in the political and economic recovery of western Europe after 1949, but the EU's interpretation of its own history left out one important catalyst to European integration: military power. There were two essential ele-

ments in converting governments, and not just a few farsighted individuals, to the European idea: the decisive military defeat of Germany in 1945 and the threat posed by the Soviet Union in the late 1940s. Together, these made Germans willing to do what had to be done to rejoin the family of nations,<sup>42</sup> and forced countries like France and the Netherlands to risk cooperation with the newly created Federal Republic.

Even so, a third component of military power was necessary to make that cooperation palatable in the 1950s: the presence in Germany of US forces and the British Army of the Rhine. European leaders did not wake up one morning in 1950 converted to the idea of harmonizing their differences through negotiation; they held their noses and sat down together because, as Alfred Grosser wrote, “a French presence in the Rhineland did not mean much in a world transformed” by the Cold War.<sup>43</sup> Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer, Paul-Henri Spaak, Alcide de Gasperi, Dirk Stikker, Joseph Luns: they and all of their colleagues understood the lessons of military power that their successors had apparently forgotten by the end of the twentieth century.

By 2001, despite what should have been the lessons of Europe’s own early twentieth century history and, more recently, of the Yugoslavian wars, European multilateralism was based solely on carrots, in a world where, demonstrably, there were both state and non-state actors that used carrots only tactically, basing their strategy entirely on sticks. American multilateralism, on the other hand, continued to differentiate between regions of the world where carrots had become the single currency—chiefly, North America and Europe—and other parts of the world where the threat or use of force necessarily remained a tool of statecraft.

With such a fundamental difference in their approach to military power, it was no wonder that Europeans and Americans had failed to define a “partnership in leadership” in the 1990s, and that after 9/11 they could not agree to wage a war on terrorism or define a common approach to using military force to deal with rogue states. Nor should it be surprising that the United States in 2001–2 began to look elsewhere for allies that shared its approach to the terrorist threat. There was no American rejection of multilateralism as a means to an end, but there was a determination in Washington to create an antiterrorist political and military coalition, as the US secretary of defense said, that would be defined by the mission, and not the other way around.

## American “Hub and Spoke Multilateralism”

The American approach to creating this antiterrorist coalition after 9/11 was based on a concept of “hub and spoke multilateralism.” At the “hub” of the coalition, Washington began to develop new “spokes,” relationships with countries around the world, while also working to connect those spokes, so that within a region, and eventually globally, all of the countries in the coalition would participate in a “wheel” of cooperation with each other. The clearest statement of the American government’s understanding of and approach to multilateralism in the wake of 9/11 was made in a speech by the State Department’s Director of Policy Planning, Richard Haass, at the Foreign Policy Association in New York on April 22, 2002, which never received the attention it deserved in Europe.

Haass described the attacks of September 11 as having “helped end the decade of complacency. They forced Americans to see clearly that foreign policy still matters, and that our oceans and our ICBMs alone do not make us safe. They brought home the stark reality that if we do not engage with the world, the world will engage with us, and in ways we may not like.”<sup>44</sup> As a result, “our innocence ended, and we entered . . . a period when increasingly potent transnational challenges intersect with still important traditional concerns.”<sup>45</sup> Having recognized the nature of these threats and challenges, the United States was developing a foreign policy, the principal aim of which was

to integrate other countries and organizations into arrangements that will sustain a world consistent with U.S. interests and values, and thereby promote peace, prosperity, and justice as widely as possible. *Integration of new partners* into our efforts will help us deal with *traditional challenges* of maintaining peace in divided regions as well as with *transnational threats* such as international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It will also help bring into the globalized world those who have previously been left out. In this era, *our fate is intertwined with the fate of others*, so our success must be shared success.<sup>46</sup>

(emphasis added)

As Haass described it, “Integration is about bringing nations together and then building frameworks of cooperation and, where feasible, institutions,” on the basis of a common acceptance of “what President Bush termed ‘the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women, private property, equal justice, religious tolerance.’”<sup>47</sup> The “historic shift” in American-Russian relations, the “unprecedented dialogue” with India, and China’s “cooperation in the

war against terrorism” all showed that the United States was “creating an architecture for this new era that will sustain the cooperative pursuit of shared global interests even when disagreements over more limited or local issues intrude—as they inevitably will.”<sup>48</sup> In doing so, the American government was using “all the tools of statecraft,” and

*over the long haul the military tool will almost certainly not be the most important contributor to our success.* Instead, a combination of diplomatic, economic, intelligence, financial, and law enforcement means—along with military—will make the difference.<sup>49</sup> (emphasis added)

All of this, on the face of it, should have been embraced by Europeans, since it reflected their own emphasis on “peace, prosperity, and justice,” humanitarian intervention, and nonmilitary instruments of power. Nevertheless, the rhetorical search for common ground disguised crucial transatlantic differences. That, for the United States, multilateralism remained *a means, not an end*; that the Clinton administration’s concept of the “in-dispensable nation” had been embraced by the Bush administration; and that it was also developing a Reagan-like willingness to question conventional wisdom about the alleged immutability of a political *status quo* became clear in Haass’s conclusions.

He described the American approach as “hard-headed multilateralism” and summarized its five “basic principles”: first, *American leadership*, without which “multilateral initiatives can be stillborn, go astray, or worse.” Second, “in forming multilateral initiatives . . . , we should not be shackled by the memories of past animosities. . . . This is an era of *new partnerships*.” Third, paraphrasing Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, Haass noted that, “‘revolving coalitions’ will evolve and change over time depending on the activity and circumstance of the country.” Fourth, the US did not rule out the *rejection* of “empty or ineffective, but high-profile, agreements,” which “do not make for an effective foreign policy.” The United States’ “desire to work cooperatively with others does not imply a willingness . . . to agree to unsound efforts just because they are popular. . . . We will not go along simply to get along.” Finally, “we can and will *act alone if necessary*.” The United States does “not take lightly the costs to ourselves and to others when we forego participation in some multilateral initiative. . . . But if we conclude that agreement is beyond reach, we will explain why and do our best to put forth alternatives.”<sup>50</sup> (emphasis added)

The failure of the Europeans to focus, in the first months after 9/11, on these tenets of the American approach to multilateralism, and to accept

that the United States took them seriously, put both sides of the Atlantic on a collision course when the United Nations took up the Iraq issue later that year.

The president took up many of the same themes in his June 1, 2002, speech at West Point. The United States was, he said,

today, from the Middle East to South Asia, . . . gathering broad international coalitions to increase the pressure for peace. We must build strong great power relations when times are good to help manage crises when times are bad.<sup>51</sup>

He emphasized that the United States would use “every tool of finance, intelligence, and law enforcement. . . . We will send diplomats where they are needed. And we will send you, our soldiers, where you’re needed” to

defend the peace against threats from terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. And we will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.<sup>52</sup>

There was now, the president said, “our best chance since the rise of the nation state in the 17th century to build a world where the great powers compete in peace instead of prepare for war.”<sup>53</sup>

Contrary, then, to European complaints that the United States was disinterested in coalitions and multilateralism, and convinced that only military means were necessary to deal with the world’s problems,<sup>54</sup> both speeches emphasized a multilateral approach and the importance of using “all the tools of statecraft.” But it is certainly true that in neither speech was there any special significance given to the transatlantic relationship. In fact, the opposite was true. The focus of both speeches was other countries and regions of the world. This rhetorical emphasis accurately reflected the shifting focus in early 2002 of American policy towards multilateral coalition-building in the war on terrorism.

Thus, Ambassador Haass described “our relationship with our European allies” as “evolving in this time when there is no Soviet threat to reinforce our unity of purpose.” He admitted that

while the bonds across the Atlantic remain strong, they are being stretched in new ways—and, yes, even strained at times—as the Europeans search to develop a common approach to international affairs consistent with their power and interests, and as we seek to enlist European cooperation in the world beyond Europe. Our relationship with Europe is not at risk. But the issues we deal with, and the ways we deal with them, are evolving.<sup>55</sup>

From a senior State Department official, this was a remarkably frank admission that the experience of 9/11 had not given the Atlantic Alliance a new “unity of purpose.”

In his speech, Haass mentioned NATO only once, in the context of adapting institutions to meet new challenges “not just in NATO, but in the Organization of American States, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the United Nations, and numerous other organizations.” He emphasized the American relationship with countries like China and India, not with Europe: “How we manage our relations with these new powers—and whether we can *forge new kinds of partnerships* with them—will be critical to our success.” The ambassador quoted, in conclusion, George Kennan’s comment that “one of the major weapons in our foreign policy arsenal” is “the cultivation of solidarity with other like-minded nations on every given issue of foreign policy” (emphasis added).<sup>56</sup> But he made no reference, as American officials routinely had for forty years, to the transatlantic relationship as an example of the success of that approach.

The president made only two direct references to Europe, one in the context of quoting George Marshall’s speech to the West Point class of 1942, whose officers had succeeded in

defeating Japan and Germany and then reconstructing those nations as allies. West Point graduates of the 1940s saw the rise of a deadly new challenge, the challenge of imperial communism, and opposed it from Korea to Berlin to Vietnam and in the cold war from beginning to end. And as the sun set on their struggle many of those West Point officers lived to see a world transformed had succeeded in “defeating Japan and Germany and then reconstructing those nations as allies.”<sup>57</sup>

The second reference was to the “deep commitment to human freedom” shared by “the United States, Japan and our Pacific friends, and now all of Europe,” and “embodied in strong alliances such as NATO.”<sup>58</sup>

But indirectly the president clearly referred to the differences dividing the European and American approaches to the terrorist threat—differences he had personally experienced during his May 2002 trip to Europe, only a week before the West Point speech.<sup>59</sup> He was speaking to American officers on the banks of the Hudson, but his message was a reply to what he had heard—and not heard—from his European hosts:

America confronted imperial communism in many different ways: diplomatic, economic, and military. Yet moral clarity was essential to our victory in the Cold War. When leaders like John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan refused to gloss over the brutality of tyrants, they gave hope to prisoners and dissidents and exiles and rallied free nations to a great cause.

Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods but not different moralities. Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time and in every place. Targeting innocent civilians for murder is always and everywhere wrong. Brutality against women is always and everywhere wrong. There can be no neutrality between justice and cruelty, between the innocent and the guilty. We are in a conflict between good and evil. And America will call evil by its name.<sup>60</sup>

The president emphasized, as Ambassador Haass had done, that “America needs partners to preserve the peace. And we will work with every nation that shares this noble goal.”<sup>61</sup> He made no special reference to the transatlantic relationship in this regard.

Immediately after 9/11, Europeans had overestimated the extent to which the United States would define the war on terrorism within the institutional framework and habits of the transatlantic relationship. They had expected to have the choice of working within NATO, of responding to American requests, or declining them, to the extent that *they* chose to do so, but American policy in the fall of 2001 had not given them that option. There was one more moment in May 2002 when Europe had the opportunity to take the Bush administration at its word—that it was committed to the kind of “hard-headed multilateralism” that Ambassador Haass had described—and to participate in shaping the content and direction of that multilateralism. But amidst its own political disarray, Europe had let that moment pass, displaying, instead, indifference to America’s new strategic priorities.

### **Underlying Structural and Decision-Making Trends**

As the first anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks approached, on both sides of the Atlantic it had begun to seem anachronistic even to use the phrase “transatlantic partnership.” Europeans and Americans were independently seeking their own answers to the questions raised by the attacks, and they differed fundamentally on how to handle other crises as well. When they came together to discuss transatlantic disagreements that had long existed—over the chronic Arab-Israeli-Palestinian issue, Iran, North Korea, and UN sanctions on Iraq—their private conversations were more shrill and their willingness to air those disagreements in public more evident. German chancellor Schroeder’s reelection campaign in August–September 2002 demonstrated that there was a great deal of

political capital to be made in Europe by stridently distancing oneself from the United States.

On all levels—strategic, operational, and tactical—by September 2002 Europeans and Americans disagreed. There were, of course, also differences within Europe and within the United States over how to deal with global instability and the threats associated with it. But these differences only made the transatlantic situation worse, by giving rise to charges of inconsistency and unpredictability on both sides.

Seen over the long course of the changing European-American relationship since the turn of the twentieth century, the strategic estrangement that gathered speed after 9/11 was not surprising. It had several components. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union deprived NATO of its *raison d'être* in 1991, but neither explains the inability of Europeans and Americans to arrive at a common strategy to deal with terrorism and global instability in 2002. In fact, the level of transatlantic acrimony and recriminations that existed by the first anniversary of 9/11 reflected fundamental differences between the two sides of the Atlantic that had been kept in check by the Soviet threat.

One factor that made a common strategy difficult was the complete reversal of the geopolitical positions of the United States and the European powers in the twentieth century. From being a regional power with global commercial interests in 1900, the United States had become *the projector* of global political and economic influence and of military power by 2000. It had not only supplanted the United Kingdom in that role, but all of Britain's once "peer competitors," notably France, Russia, and Germany, in the course of the twentieth century.

Europeans, meanwhile, had collectively in the EU assumed the American role of a century before, that of a power with regional political and military interests, but only commercial ones worldwide. As the United States was a "free rider" on the global stability underwritten by the British taxpayer and the Royal Navy in 1900, so Europeans benefitted from, while criticizing, American power projection a century later.<sup>62</sup> This situation led to resentments on both sides of the Atlantic. Europeans in 2001 chafed at their dependence on American power, while their failure to bear global military burdens to a degree commensurate with European wealth and economic power provoked resentment in Washington.

The chief utility of the United States to the European democracies in the twentieth century was its ability to devote virtually unlimited resources to

developing military capabilities, a role that it played in two world wars and as guarantor of last resort against Soviet aggression in the Cold War. The United States assumed that role, as “redresser” of the Old World balance, because Europeans were incapable of playing it successfully alone. For fifty years, the American political and military role *in Europe* was defined through, originally, Anglo-American and, later, NATO consultation. Their cumulative experience in the half century from 1941 to 1991 led Europeans to a false understanding of American foreign policy<sup>63</sup> as a whole. The definition of the American political and military role in NATO was always *sui generis*, not typical of the focus, decision-making, or implementation of US foreign policy in general. But Europeans, especially Germans, failed to understand this.

In part, this was due to the fact that there grew up in Washington during the Cold War two foreign policy establishments at the working level, and Europeans generally had contact with only one of them. This was particularly true of West Germany, which was not a member of the United Nations until 1973 and did not have to deal with the colonial and post-colonial issues that preoccupied Britain, France, and the United States in the UN and elsewhere in the 1950s and 1960s. Instead, the Federal Republic was one side of an extensive working-level German-American network that focused on the East-West relationship, the development of the European Community, and NATO. This network was centered in the Foreign and Defense Ministries in Bonn, the State and Defense Departments in Washington, and numerous American think tanks. It originally grew out of the core of Americans who served as civilians or military officers in the occupation of Germany, but it was cultivated and expanded by the conscious efforts of both governments and, especially, of German foundations and cultural exchange programs over the years. The German-American network grew in significance when France withdrew from NATO’s integrated military command in 1967. It still existed in 2002, but its influence on and centrality to American foreign policy had declined after the end of the Cold War.

Without intending to do so, this network had isolated the Federal Republic from other issues in the American foreign policy debate and prevented a broader and deeper understanding of the policy process in Washington. With no role, unlike Britain and France, in global power projection and the UN Security Council, West German foreign policy dealt almost exclusively with the Soviet Union, NATO, and the EC. Working in Washington, Bonn, Mons, and Brussels with American counterparts who were also experts on these issues, West Germans were rarely privy to American

policy discussions focusing on the Americas, Africa, or Asia. They had little, if any, contact with American colleagues dealing with those parts of the world, such was the self-sustaining circle of diplomats and military officers who rotated during the Cold War from Washington to Moscow and Bonn, West Berlin to NATO, and back again.

Beyond the range of this circle, American foreign policy toward other parts of the world was conducted by diplomats, military officers, development experts, and others whose paths rarely, if ever, crossed those of the network dealing with NATO and East-West issues. As the United States Navy has an Atlantic and a Pacific fleet, in a certain sense, the United States in the Cold War had an Atlantic and a Pacific (non-Atlantic) foreign policy process at the working level.<sup>64</sup> Naturally, the efforts of the two came together at the top level of political decision making, but American presidents and secretaries of state and defense made a clear distinction between those issues requiring NATO consultation and those that did not. American foreign policy decisions on questions that did not directly concern NATO and the European allies were always, in the way in which Europeans began to use the word in the 1990s, “unilateral.” The allies were informed, but they were not consulted, at least not formally or collectively.

Two generations of NATO communiq  s and the rhetoric of Eurocentric Americans like George Kennan contributed to disguising the extent to which this was true. But even at the height of the Cold War, the United States was first and foremost a hemispheric and a Pacific power—in reality and in its own self-image—as was apparent when threats emerged in those parts of the world during the Cold War years. There was nothing more “unilateral” than the American response in 1962 to the Cuban missile crisis. Ensuring American survival by securing freedom of action to the south and west had been the central theme of American foreign policy from its origins to the defeat of Japan in 1945. It never lost its centrality, not even at the height of the Cold War, but Washington had the resources that permitted it not to have to choose between its Atlantic and its hemispheric and Pacific political-military roles.

American foreign policy as a whole was never Eurocentric, but this was not how it appeared to the European allies—again, especially to West Germans—during the Cold War, and the Eurocentric misinterpretation had several consequences over the years. One of the most important in the wake of 9/11 was Europe’s overestimation of the extent to which the United States had been influenced by European opinion in years past. In

fact, historically, throughout the Cold War years after the end of the Korean War, Washington had expected and demanded little from its European allies in the way of political or military support outside of Europe. It came to expect (and tolerate) a good deal of criticism of American policies from its allies, but their criticism rarely had the impact that Europeans frequently supposed, unless it happened to dovetail (as in the case of Vietnam) with dissent in the United States itself.

What changed after the Cold War in Washington was not the way in which American foreign policy toward the rest of the world was conducted, but the expectation raised by European rhetoric about CFSP and ESDP that the European allies would finally make a major contribution to political-military burden-sharing outside Europe. They failed in the 1990s to live up to those expectations. What changed after Kosovo was the way in which US decisions on such issues as missile defense, which had previously been defined, at least in part, as NATO issues, were no longer seen that way by Washington. What changed after September 11 was the speed with which the American foreign policy agenda shifted away from NATO and Europe, to focus on parts of the world where American policy had *never* been made in consultation with the European allies.

But on both sides of the Atlantic, these were fundamentally procedural issues. In the wake of 9/11, habits of political consultation could have been changed, mutual expectations lowered, military capabilities improved. Why, in the first year after the terrorist attacks, was there so little willingness to change, to make the adjustments that would have made it possible for the two sides of the Atlantic to define a common strategy to deal with terrorism and global instability?

## **Europe's "Rogue State"**

The failure to reestablish transatlantic unity of effort in 2001–2 reflected the differing interpretations in Europe and America of *why* the United States was attacked on September 11. Those interpretations, in turn, said a great deal about the political identity of the United States, as it had evolved over four centuries, and the attempt of the embryonic European Union to develop a political identity of its own. If Washington in the 1990s was already concerned with "rogue states," so were Europeans—and the one that worried them most was, in their eyes, the United States.<sup>65</sup> By

September 11, 2001, that perception was reinforced by their entrenched stereotypes of a “toxic Texan.”

After 9/11, perhaps the greatest shock to the European system was the discovery of what should have been clear all along, but had been disguised by the nature of the American relationship with Europe during the Cold War: the United States is not a European power. Its approach to international relations and the use of military force differs drastically from Europe’s, as has already been discussed. But there are even more fundamental differences. The identity of the United States is, in large measure, still revolutionary and anti-status quo. American pressure on Britain to accept decolonization during World War II, and on France and Britain during the 1956 Suez crisis, was a much better indicator of the American approach to the world than was its role as guardian of the Cold War status quo in Europe. Europeans and Americans have an entirely different definition of what constitutes “global stability” and what is desirable and acceptable as a means to achieve it.

The extent to which Europe and the United States have historically diverged on a definition of global stability was disguised in the crucial decade from 1989 to 1999. A small but influential segment of the American foreign policy elite that tends to share a more European approach to the question held political power in Washington in the first Bush administration, as the Cold War came to an end and the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia collapsed. It continued to wield significant influence throughout much of the Clinton administration. But in an America at war after 9/11, its influence diminished. As it always had historically, an existential threat to the United States brought out the country’s revolutionary origins.

From the founding of the republic, a debate has raged between those, on the one hand, who see the United States’ role in the world as being a “model” of republican democracy, and those who believe that a more activist approach is required to propagate the republican ideal. Through much of American history, the former have held the upper hand. Volumes have been written to explain why, but it is no great surprise that the arguments of those advocating that the United States should “stay home” resonate with an American public generally descended from immigrants who had fled economic and political troubles overseas. “Staying home” is also cheaper—or seems to be, in the short term. This was the great mistake of the 1990s, a decade in which the American government neglected the economic development and cultural aspects of its foreign policy, on the

blithe assumption that the private sector, trade, and “globalization” would ensure democratization and stability in the post–Cold War world.<sup>66</sup>

In wartime, the balance shifts to those who advocate activist propagation of the republican ideal—but only in a certain kind of war, when there is a consensus in the United States that the country is facing an existential threat to the future of the republic itself. This has only happened five times in American history: the American Revolution; the Civil War; the two world wars of the twentieth century; and after 9/11, against “enemies [who] are totalitarians, holding a creed of power with no place for human dignity.”<sup>67</sup> In the context of an existential threat, American leaders have always forcefully articulated the nation’s founding ideals, embraced an activist foreign policy, and expended the resources necessary to create a decisive military instrument of national power.

Moreover, politicians who began their careers skeptical about the need for an activist approach have frequently become its most committed advocates, if the survival of the United States was at stake. Abraham Lincoln’s abolitionism and the ruthlessness with which the armies of the Union defeated Southern secession, like Woodrow Wilson’s willingness to take America to war and offer the world a liberal democratic alternative to both empire and Marxist-Leninism, testify to this. Existential war was the catalyst to the conversion of politicians who began their careers with different ideas about the role of the United States government and the projection of American power. George W. Bush may be the latest president to undergo a conversion to multilateral engagement and an activist American foreign policy as a result of a threat to American existence. He is not the first.

He is also not the first president to articulate the revolutionary, anti-status quo—indeed, subversive—nature of the United States. From the obvious example of Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence through Wilson’s Fourteen Points to Franklin Roosevelt’s Atlantic Charter, the American concept of individual self-determination has always been a dangerous idea<sup>68</sup> to absolute monarchs, oligarchs, and totalitarians of the right and left. Its survival was sometimes a close-run thing.<sup>69</sup> When Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg of his determination “that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth,” it was not a rhetorical flourish. The end of the American republic would have meant the end of republican government.

In the first year after 9/11, the United States government, the Congress, the vast majority of the American people, and the “American intellectuals”

whose defense of the war in Afghanistan as a just war caused such consternation in Germany<sup>70</sup> all saw the threat from totalitarian terrorists<sup>71</sup> as one which, potentially, threatened not only the political, but also the literal existence of the United States, should such terrorists develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction. As Daniel Hamilton wrote:

Their capacity to kill is limited only by the “capabilities” of their weapons. Their goal is not to influence opinion or win supporters. It is to destroy societies. They have propelled us into an era of catastrophic terrorism. . . . The threat from terrorism and the WMD threat are indivisible and collectively constitute our worst nightmare.<sup>72</sup>

Hamilton expressed the American consensus in his conclusion that “the only possible answer to such ideological fanaticism and suicidal holy warriors is unwavering resistance. . . . Our true crime in their eyes is that we disseminate the dynamism of a free and democratic culture. In their eyes, our crime is less what we do than who we are.”<sup>73</sup>

This was not, with rare exceptions,<sup>74</sup> Europe’s interpretation of why the United States was the target of the September 11 attacks. And therein lay the source of the unbridgeable divide across the Atlantic in 2002. In the year after 9/11, the European discussion of why the attacks took place was an unsavory effort to “explain” them as the result of US policies. Europe’s explanations frequently came perilously close to being justifications. The motives of Europeans differed fundamentally from those of the terrorists, but the tone and substance of their analyses were profoundly different from that in the United States.

At the time, this generally went unnoticed by the broader American public, and by early 2003, the focus of the transatlantic discourse had shifted to disagreements over Iraq. Since 2003, the American invasion of and presence in Iraq has generally been accepted as the source of European opposition to the United States and hatred—it is not too strong a word—of George Bush. But this was not the case; hostility toward the United States and European “explanations” of 9/11 had already caused consternation and disbelief among the American intellectual and political elite that had regular contact with Europeans in the fall of 2001.

In an exchange of letters in 2002 with colleagues in Germany who had denounced the American attack on Afghanistan, sixty “American intellectuals” captured the disquiet that the European discussion caused them.<sup>75</sup> In asking the Europeans to take a position on whether the use of force was ever morally justified, they commented that “simply denouncing the United

States for nearly everything that it has done in the world since 1945, while certainly your prerogative, does not relieve you from the responsibility” of taking such a position. They described as “an act of moral blindness” the Germans’ use of the word “mass murder” to compare unintended civilian casualties in Afghanistan with the “intentional killing” of civilians on September 11, “where the goal [was] to *maximize* the loss of civilian life.” They said, simply, “We are saddened by these comments,” a phrase that captured the reaction of American decision makers, as well, not just to one letter, but to the European discussion as a whole, in 2001–2.

In their second letter, the “American intellectuals” remarked that their German correspondents had criticized the alleged rise of “fundamentalist forces” in the United States, while “nowhere in your letter do you express alarm about ‘fundamentalist forces’ gaining ground in the Muslim world. . . . Why this discrepancy? Is it only ‘fundamentalism’ in the U.S. to which you object? Is it your contention that ‘fundamentalist forces’ in the Muslim world . . . pose a lesser threat to the world today than do the ‘fundamentalist forces’ that you fear are gaining ground in the United States?”<sup>76</sup> Unfortunately, in discussions with European colleagues in the first few months after September 11, many Americans had found that their answer to the last two questions was yes.

In explaining the terrorist attacks by reference to American policy failures in the 1990s, notably Washington’s disinterest in Afghanistan after the Soviet defeat there, and as a result of US support for Israel, Europeans took little notice of the fact that Americans were engaged in the same debate at home. There was also in the United States after 9/11 a critical discussion, both of what the United States had done wrong in the 1990s and of its conduct of the war on terrorism. But there was a fundamental difference between the American and European searches for “explanations.”

The American critique sought to identify policy mistakes that contributed to a climate conducive to support for totalitarian terrorists, and to avoid them in the future—hence, the long-overdue return to serious planning and funding of the cultural and economic aspects of American foreign policy. The European critique went beyond that, however, hoping to identify a change in US policy that would make the terrorists go away: the abandonment of Israel, perhaps, the withdrawal of US armed forces from Saudi Arabia. This was a human enough urge, but one that American decision makers found hopelessly out of touch with the reality of the threat posed by the combination of the intentions already demonstrated by

totalitarian terrorists and their potential capabilities, if armed with weapons of mass destruction.

To use a historical analogy: there was widespread recognition during World War II of the way in which punitive Allied policies after World War I had contributed to German support for National Socialism. But the Nazi threat had to be defeated first, before a different policy of reconciliation could be pursued with a different German government. The European failure to differentiate between circumstances in which reconciliation is possible and those requiring “unwavering resistance” had a profoundly negative impact on American decision makers in the year after 9/11. They found more wishful thinking than serious analysis in Europe’s approach to the terrorist threat. This, in turn, contributed to the increasing disinterest of Washington in European opinions, as was clear from the American government’s reaction to early criticism of the internment of Taliban and al-Qaeda captives at Guantanamo Bay.

## **Conclusion**

In a way that was depressing, if not surprising, it became obvious in the year after 9/11 that, in many ways, the United States and the terrorists of al-Qaeda understood each other—and the future that was at stake—better than the Europeans understood either of them. It was clear to Americans after 9/11 that the future represented by the American idea could not co-exist with the terrorists’ totalitarian aspirations. While it is politically irresponsible to mistake a situation as a zero-sum game when it is not, it is strategically disastrous not to recognize a zero-sum game, if the enemy sees it as such. The United States accepted this; Europeans would not even consider the question. Unwilling to accept the necessity to use military force *in Afghanistan*—Iraq was not yet even on the agenda—Europe’s only recourse was to believe that a change in American policy and behavior would somehow remove the whole terrorist issue. Clinging to the idea that the international system no longer required the use of force, despite years of experience in the 1990s that demonstrated the opposite, Europeans had to believe that al-Qaeda was not playing a zero-sum game and that American hyperpower was ultimately responsible for terrorist violence.

This corrosive—to the transatlantic relationship—European approach to the terrorist threat was, ultimately, no accident. The final component of the disintegrating transatlantic political and military relationship in 2002

was the European attempt after 1990 to mobilize support for the European Union through the critical contrasting of American society, politics, and culture with the supposedly superior model provided by Europe. As Daniel Hamilton ruefully remarked after 9/11, “If the Europeans define themselves by what they are not—namely, that they are not American—and not by what they are, then that will be a declaration of bankruptcy of the European ideal.”<sup>77</sup>

Unfortunately, after the end of the Cold War, that was the path that Europe followed. To a certain extent—perhaps even to a large extent, except on the left- and right-wing political extremes, this process was originally unconscious. But over time, as a strategy of political mobilization to create a sense of “Europeanness,” it was successful, especially with younger Europeans who came of age after the Cold War. Painting a picture of the EU as a “counter-America” became a politically attractive path in the 1990s to explain the necessity for the European Union to otherwise skeptical European voters.

After a decade of this, by 2001, when asked to define what made them “European,” European students would frequently name the characteristics that (they believed) distinguished Europe from the United States: social consciousness, environmental awareness, rejection of capital punishment. When asked to identify what they had in common as Europeans without reference to the United States—a young German with a young Portuguese, Greek, or French student—the answers became far more problematic. Knowledge of each other’s languages, histories, current politics, and cultures was superficial or nonexistent—but young Europeans were conscious of being “non-Americans.”

Until the September 11 attacks, this strategy appeared to be cost free, in terms of its impact on the transatlantic relationship. But the year after 9/11 revealed the political price of mobilizing support for the European Union in such a way. The constant drumbeat of criticism of the United States—not only for what it did abroad, but for what it was, allegedly, at home—had taken its toll. Without sharing in any way sympathy for either the terrorists’ violent methods or their ultimate goals, many Europeans nevertheless had doubts about American society. Was it worth defending? Did it warrant their “unconditional solidarity” in the fight against terrorism? European politicians, even those who wanted to, had difficulty framing positive answers to those questions after a decade of using the United States as the negative example of what Europe was not, and did not intend to become.

In that climate, there was little reason to have expected on 9/11 that the transatlantic political-military partnership of the Cold War years would be reestablished because of the terrorist threat. On the contrary, in the months that followed, Europeans remained hostile to the extent and nature of American power, apparently more preoccupied with the theoretical danger posed by a “hegemonic” United States than with the real and present threat from terrorists who had made perfectly clear their motives, methods, capabilities, and goals. Meanwhile, the United States concluded in those first critical months after the attacks that building new partnerships elsewhere in the world, while retaining its freedom of action, was “the only way to secure order in a world where its voice [was] now louder than ever and the fight against international terrorism [had] only just begun.”<sup>78</sup> The year after 9/11 confirmed what Kosovo had already shown, that the US and Europe no longer shared a consensus on how to deal with threats to their security. Given the global nature of the war on terror, the future of American foreign and defense policy would certainly be multilateral, but after 2002, it would not principally be transatlantic. **SSQ**

### **Notes**

1. The initial research for this article was done while I was a visiting scholar in 2002 at the Centre for Applied Policy Research (CAP), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet, Munich, with the generous financial support of the Bertelsmann Foundation. I thank Prof. Dr. Werner Weidenfeld, Director of CAP, for the invitation to reflect on the transatlantic relationship in the first year after 9/11, and for the support that he and his colleagues gave the project. I am especially grateful to Nicole Schley, Wolfgang Buecherl, Franco Alghieri, and my fellow visiting scholar, Dr. Esther Ezra, for good conversations, constructive criticism, and collegial hospitality during my stay at CAP.

Simultaneously, I was Vielberth Visiting Professor at the University of Regensburg, and I thank Prof. Dr. Stephan Bierling for the opportunity to co-teach a graduate seminar on issues confronting Europe and the United States in what was a pivotal year for the transatlantic relationship. I profited greatly from the thoughtful comments of the students in that seminar. Professor Bierling and his assistant, Dr. Herbert Maier, were the most generous of colleagues during my stay in Regensburg.

Since 2003, I have had the opportunity to discuss the issues raised in this article with colleagues and students at the Air Command and Staff College. It is impossible for me to name them all here, but essential that I thank my department chair, Dr. Charles Costanzo, for his continuing support of my teaching and scholarship. In the last four years, I have especially benefited from conversations with the American and international officers who participated in my research seminars on US grand strategy since the end of the Cold War, and the European Union in a globalized world.

Finally, I would like to thank the anonymous referees of this article, and especially Dr. Anthony C. Cain and his colleagues at *SSQ*, Tawanda Eaves and Betty Littlejohn, for their comments,

constructive editing, and encouragement in preparing it for publication. The views expressed here are mine alone, and do not reflect the opinions of any of the individuals or institutions named above; nor do they represent the views of the Air Command and Staff College, the US Air Force, or the US Department of Defense.

2. There is a tendency to forget today that complaints about American “unilateralism” predated the arrival of George W. Bush in the White House by several years. There was a strong, negative reaction in Europe to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s 1998 description of the United States as the “indispensable nation,” which was, in fact, a quote from President Clinton’s second inaugural address in 1997, in which he had said, “America stands alone as the world’s indispensable nation.” Clinton was talking about American economic success and globalization, but Albright explicitly applied the phrase to foreign policy: “If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future.” In May 2000, in a book-length interview with Dominique Moisi, *Les cartes de la France à l’heure de la mondialisation* (Fayard), the French foreign minister, Hubert Vedrine, used the term “hyperpuissance” to describe the United States. Perhaps most tellingly, the cover of the March 2000 issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* (<http://www.afsa.org/fsj/Journal2000.cfm>) showed the “Lone Ranger” on his white horse, carrying an American flag, over the title “America Rides Alone: American Exceptionalism and U.S. Foreign Policy.” When that issue was published, Gov. George W. Bush had just lost the New Hampshire presidential primary to Senator John McCain.

3. As John Lewis Gaddis said of the then new Bush administration in a May 1989 “Conversation with History” interview with Harry Kreisler (<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/conversations/Gaddis/gaddis-con3.html>)—before the opening of the Berlin Wall, but after Hungary had opened its border to Austria: “[T]hey have no idea of what they’re creating at the moment. . . . There’s a general sense out there now that, yes, we’re coming to the end of the Cold War period, that there’s something new out there that’s developing, but I don’t see anybody who has a comparably Kenan-esque or Achesonian vision of what this is at the moment.”

4. Ibid.

5. An argument that the French also made—and lost to Germany—with regard to the EU.

6. Contrary to public perceptions, it was not the victory of Republicans in the midterm US Congressional elections a month later that brought about this change. Richard Holbrooke, “America, A European Power,” *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (March/April 1995): 38–51.

7. The background and context of German support for NATO enlargement and influence on the Clinton administration’s reversal of policy are discussed more fully in Edwina S. Campbell, “Germany’s Approach to European Security,” *Brassey’s 1996 Defence Yearbook* (King’s College, London: Centre for Defence Studies, 1996).

8. The 1994 decision of the Federal Constitutional Court allowing such deployments with Bundestag approval eventually provided political cover for the German government. Whether there had ever been a constitutional issue remains subject to debate. See Georg Nolte, “Ensuring Political Legitimacy for the Use of Military Forces by Requiring Constitutional Accountability,” in Charlotte Ku and Harold K. Jacobson, eds., *Democratic Accountability and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 231–53.

9. Charlotte Ku and Harold K. Jacobson, “Broaching the Issues,” in *ibid.*, 3–35.

10. Quoted in Gerd Foehrenbach’s excellent analysis of the transatlantic relationship in the Clinton years, “Die transatlantische Sicherheitspartnerschaft an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert,” *Politik und Gesellschaft Online* 1/2001, [http://www.fes.de/ipg1\\_2001/artfoehrenbach.htm](http://www.fes.de/ipg1_2001/artfoehrenbach.htm).

11. The program and speeches of the 2001 Munich Conference on Security Policy are at [http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/2001/index.php?menu\\_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=31&](http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/2001/index.php?menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=31&).

12. And with less attention to his State Department colleague, Madeleine Albright, who warned the Europeans not to “duplicate” military assets already extant in NATO. This warning was completely counterproductive, a point the Clinton administration never seemed to grasp. It played into the hands of European politicians who did not want to ask their taxpayers for higher defense budgets, but who argued that they were being “pro-American” and “Atlanticist” by avoiding duplication—in other words, by failing to devote greater resources to defense, as Cohen simultaneously urged.

13. Developments since 1999 can be found at [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?cmsid=246&lang=EN](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/solana/index.asp?cmsid=246&lang=EN).

14. The *Petersberg Tasks*, a term which is still largely unknown in the United States, were adopted by the Western European Union (WEU) in 1992 and incorporated into Article 17 of the EU’s 1997 Amsterdam Treaty. They include humanitarian and rescue missions, peacekeeping, and crisis management and peacemaking, but not war fighting in the classical sense. See [http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/petersberg\\_tasks\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/petersberg_tasks_en.htm). Since neither the air strikes on Bosnia in 1995 nor on Kosovo and Serbia in 1999 were “Petersberg” missions, this conclusion struck American observers as particularly odd.

15. See Edwina S. Campbell, *France’s Defence Reforms: The ‘Challenge of Empiricism,’* London Defence Study #36 (King’s College, London: Brassey’s for the Centre for Defence Studies, October 1996).

16. The NATO Strategic Concept is at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>.

17. For a discussion of this, see Edwina S. Campbell, *Die Relevanz amerikanischer Macht: anglo-amerikanische Vergangenheit und euro-atlantische Zukunft* (Munich: Hanns Seidel Stiftung, 2001), 41–55, [http://www.hss.de/downloads/aktuelle\\_analysen\\_21.pdf](http://www.hss.de/downloads/aktuelle_analysen_21.pdf).

18. Preface to Julian Lindley-French, *Terms of Engagement: The Paradox of American Power and the Transatlantic Dilemma Post-11 September*, Chaillot Paper no. 52, The European Union Institute for Security Studies, May 2002, 5.

19. In Tom Heneghan, “‘Toxic Texan’ amid His Toughest Critics,” Reuters (Paris), 26 May 2002. See Pascal Bruckner’s interesting essay on “The Paradoxes of Anti-Americanism,” *Dissent* 53, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 9–14, <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=650>.

20. For (an all too rare) example, see Stephan Bierling, “Die Europaeische Union und die USA,” in Werner Weidenfeld, ed., *Europa-Handbuch* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002), 639–59. Andrei S. Markovits explores the issue of cultural anti-Americanism in Europe in *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe Dislikes America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). See also Dan Diner, *America in the Eyes of the Germans: An Essay on Anti-Americanism* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996).

21. See NATO Press Release (2001) 124 of 12 September 2001, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01-124e.htm>; Statement by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, of 2 October 2001, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011002a.htm>; and UNSC Resolutions 1368 (2001) of 12 September 2001, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/533/82/PDF/N0153382.pdf?OpenElement>, and 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/557/43/PDF/N0155743.pdf?OpenElement>. UNSC Resolution 1373 noted that the Council was “acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,” in other words, dealing with a threat to international peace and security, as defined by the Charter.

22. The phrase is infamous in Germany. Despite much criticism from within his own SPD-Greens coalition, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, immediately after 9/11, had declared Germany’s “unconditional solidarity” with the United States (<http://www.germnews.de/archive/dn/2001/09/17.html>), but he won reelection less than a year later by demonstrating the

opposite. See Karl-Heinz Kamp, “Germany and the United States: Anatomy of a Crisis,” in Notes du Cerfa (Paris), (septembre 2003) 4, S. 1-9, [http://www.kas.de/publikationen/2003/2174\\_dokument.html](http://www.kas.de/publikationen/2003/2174_dokument.html). As Kamp noted, Schroeder’s stance in the 2002 election campaign was popular beyond left-wing voters, and “even the conservatives interpreted the German plea [*sic—pledge?*] of ‘unconditional solidarity’ conditionally.”

23. In this regard, the terrorists were more consistent in their understanding of political symbolism than were Europeans horrified by the attacks on the Twin Towers, some of whom had, in the past, applauded “anti-globalization” attacks on McDonald’s in Europe. If the Pentagon was a symbol of American military power, then both McDonald’s and the World Trade Center were symbols of American economic power; there was only a difference in scale in an attack on an individual McDonald’s. See “Jose Bove: The Man Who Dismantled a McDonalds,” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A706736>. The third, thwarted attack of 9/11 was aimed, apparently, at a symbol of American political power, the Capitol.

24. Kamp, “Germany and the United States.”

25. The Joint Declaration of September 14, 2001, also signed by the President of the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission, and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/Declaration.en1.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/Declaration.en1.pdf).

26. It is, of course, impossible to know what would have happened in such a hypothetical situation, but I asked numerous European journalists, foreign policy experts, and colleagues, both civilian and military, in May–June 2002 to tell me how they thought they and their governments would have reacted to an attack only on the Pentagon. Only two of them felt strongly that European reactions would have been the same as they were. The vast majority, when they considered the question, responded that the initial European response would have been quite different, had the World Trade Center not been attacked—or even had it been attacked, but on a different day and time, destroying only the building, but without thousands of civilian casualties.

27. There was, clearly, an *emotional* reaction in the United States to the number of casualties and the heroism of the New York City police and fire departments, as well as to that of the Arlington County, Virginia, police and fire departments that responded to the attack on the Pentagon.

28. John Sack tells the story of a young US Army medic, Eddie Rivera, who after a day of treating heavy casualties, pinned down under fire in Afghanistan, thinks, “What am I even doing here? And then Rivera remembers the World Trade Center. Remembers the flaring fires like Zeus’ lightning bolts . . . the towers collapsing, the ashes supplanting them, the ash-plastered people running away. . . . It’s not two platoons. . . . It’s three thousand people! As bad as Anaconda is, Rivera thinks, we’re better off. . . . And now Rivera remembers why he’s here.” “Anaconda,” *Esquire* 138, no. 2 (August 2002): 122.

29. Made by numerous American decision makers and commentators, in this case by former Clinton administration deputy assistant secretary of state for European Affairs Daniel S. Hamilton, *Die Zukunft ist nicht mehr, was sie war: Europa, Amerika, und die neue weltpolitische Lage* (Stuttgart: Robert Bosch Stiftung, 2002), 22.

30. EU Joint Declaration of 14 September 2001.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Letter dated 7 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, circulated as S/2001/946, on 7 October 2001, at: <http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov/s-2001-946.htm>.

34. U.S. Public Law 107-40 (Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Those Responsible for the Recent Attacks Launched Against the United States), 107th Congress, 18 September 2001: “[T]he President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations, or persons.” At: [http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/sept\\_11/sjres23\\_eb.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/sept_11/sjres23_eb.htm).

35. For the state of US public opinion six months after September 11, see: <http://peoplepress.org/commentary/display.php?AnalysisID=44>.

36. Lindley-French, *Terms of Engagement*, 5.

37. At least for Europeans, although, as Walter Russell Mead has pointed out, defending one's honor against insults is an enduring part of the American foreign policy tradition. See his “The Jacksonian Tradition and American Foreign Policy,” *The National Interest* 58 (Winter 1999/2000): 5–29, <http://www.nationalinterest.org>. The article is chap. 8 of Mead’s *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

38. See Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2000).

39. As I personally experienced at numerous conferences and discussions in Washington and Europe throughout the 1990s.

40. As Charles Kupchan wrote in “The Fourth Age: The Next Era in Transatlantic Relations,” *The National Interest* 85 (September/October 2006): 81, Germany and France “did not just opt out of the war . . . but they mounted a determined and successful campaign to deny the United States the backing of the UN Security Council”; and “by denying the war a UN blessing,” they “arguably imposed considerable costs on the United States in terms of both resources and lives.”

41. The oft-(mis)quoted comment was not part of the secretary’s prepared remarks, but was in response to a question near the end of a briefing by Secretary Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen Richard Myers, at the Washington Foreign Press Center, on 22 January 2003. At [http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/t0123\\_2003\\_t0122sdpc.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/t0123_2003_t0122sdpc.html).

42. The World War II allies declared their “inflexible purpose to destroy German militarism and Nazism and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world.” Only then would “there be hope for a decent life for Germans, and a place for them in the comity of nations.” “Communiqué Issued at the End of the Yalta Conference,” *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1955), 970–71.

43. *Affaires Exterieures* (Paris: Flammarion, 1984), 34.

44. Richard N. Haass, “Defining US Foreign Policy in a Post-Post–Cold War World,” The 2002 Arthur Ross Lecture, Remarks to the Foreign Policy Association, New York, April 22, 2002, at <http://www.state.gov/s/p/rem/9632.htm>.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Pres. George W. Bush (graduation address, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, 1 June 2002), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. See, for example, Michael Cox, "American Power before and after 11 September: Dizzy with Success?" *International Affairs* 78, no. 2 (April 2002): 276: "When the war [against terrorism] began there were those who hoped it would curb the unilateralist inclinations of the Bush administration, and that it would emerge on the other side converted to the cause of coalitions and multilateralism. In reality, the war has had almost the opposite effect." The war to which Cox refers is not Iraq. His article was written and published a year before, in April 2002, at the same time as the Haass speech. He, like most commentary in Europe in early 2002, simply dismissed anything that the United States said or did that indicated a positive approach to multilateral cooperation. Their dismissal is hard to explain: Cox must have been writing at about the time that the Afghan Loya Jirga was meeting in Bonn (December 2001), and while the United States was actively pursuing "coalitions and multilateralism," both regionally, in central and south Asia, and at the UN. Unlike countries elsewhere in the world that began new relationships with the US in 2001–2, the Europeans' own view of multilateralism as an end in itself ("the cause," as Cox calls it), often combined with their stereotypical view of President Bush to blind them to opportunities for transatlantic cooperation.

55. Haass, "Defining U.S. Foreign Policy."

56. Ibid.

57. President Bush, graduation address.

58. Ibid.

59. See the transcripts of Nick Bryant, "On Tour with President Bush," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2005216.stm>. As Bryant described Bush's May 23 speech to the Bundestag in Berlin: "Polite applause greeted his remarks. But it was clear that no great enthusiasm lay behind them. Europe just does not seem to 'get it,' in the view of the White House. His short stay in Berlin—less than 20 hours long—will no doubt have reinforced its sense of isolation."

60. President Bush, graduation address.

61. Ibid.

62. This comparison is more fully developed in Edwina S. Campbell, *The Relevance of American Power: The Anglo-American Past and the Euro-Atlantic Future*, London Defence Study no. 49 (King's College, London: Centre for Defence Studies, June 1999). Translated with a new concluding chapter as *Die Relevanz amerikanischer Macht: anglo-amerikanische Vergangenheit und euro-atlantische Zukunft*, Aktuelle Analysen (#21) der Akademie fuer Politik und Zeitgeschehen der Hanns Seidel Stiftung, December 2000.

63. As used in this discussion, "foreign policy" is to be understood as encompassing security and defense policies, not, as the term is frequently used in Europe, as something separate from those two.

64. In the United States armed forces, this split was reflected in the focus of the sea services (US Navy and Marine Corps) on the Pacific and Western Hemisphere, and of the US Army and Air Force on Europe.

65. See, for an excellent, pre-9/11 analysis of "the US as rogue state," Francois Heisbourg, "American Hegemony? Perceptions of the US Abroad," *Survival* 41, no. 4 (Winter 1999–2000): 5–19.

66. "For a time it seemed that American primacy was enough. . . . But, in the absence of a defining idea for American policy, this transitional period became a time of one step forward, one step back. . . . Democracy spread as never before, yet in many places its roots remained shallow and vulnerable to disappointment and backlash. . . . Still, despite the lack of clarity,

most Americans perceived a seemingly inexorable positive trend in international developments.” Haass, “Defining U.S. Foreign Policy.”

67. President Bush, graduation address.

68. The realization of which, not without mistakes, failures, and detours, is the history of the United States.

69. “Had [the South’s] sacrifice been crowned with victory, the myths created would surely have sustained an independent nation into eternity. They were not given the chance to do so because the North’s population also imagined a nation, and one which encompassed the whole Union. . . . But the outcome was anything but inevitable, the role of battle, chance and leadership vital.” Dominic Lieven, “Dilemmas of Empire 1850–1918. Power, Territory, Identity,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 2 (April 1999): 163–200.

70. See Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 147–49.

71. “[T]hey seek to impose a joyless conformity, to control every life and all of life.” President Bush, graduation address.

72. Hamilton, *Die Zukunft ist nicht mehr*, 21.

73. Ibid., 35–36.

74. Among the most prominent, Oriana Fallaci, *La rage et l’orgueil* (Paris: Plon, 2002), which was widely denounced in Europe.

75. “Is the Use of Force Ever Morally Justified? A Response from Americans to Colleagues in Germany,” 8 August 2002; the complete exchange, background to it, and list of all sixty American participants is at: [http://www.americanvalues.org/index.html#september\\_11\\_challenge](http://www.americanvalues.org/index.html#september_11_challenge). They included Jean Elshtain, Laura Spelman Rockefeller, Michael Walzer, Amitai Etzioni, Charles Wilson, and George Weigel.

76. Ibid.

77. Hamilton, *Die Zukunft ist nicht mehr*, 59.

78. Cox, “American Power,” 276.